



Daily Report

Latin America

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Cuba

Fidel Castro Views Joint U.S. Migration Accord

FL0705215895 Havana Cuba Vision Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 7 May 95

[From the "NTV Sunday Supplement" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] This newscast clearly should lead with the report on Commander in Chief Fidel Castro's attendance at last night's Bolivian Embassy reception, hosted by the Bolivian ambassador to Havana in honor of Bolivian Foreign Minister Antonio Aranibar. Correspondent Lino Fernandez has more:

[Begin recording] [Fernandez] The president of the Councils of State and Ministers spoke with reporters who were following him around about the U.S.-Cuban migration agreement.

[Castro] It seems that we—both the United States and Cuba—should establish a constructive policy on all of these problems. Problems develop worldwide every day. I recently told a reporter that you cannot solve problems with force; instead, there must be dialogue. You can only solve problems through dialogue. We try to solve problems through constructive dialogue whenever possible.

I believe the atmosphere could be improved. We could reduce tension. It was not an organized and deliberate plan to find other objectives. Undoubtedly, circles within the very United States had influence. We must remember that the majority of the U.S. press and many U.S. businessmen object to the blockade. They demand a change in policy. I believe Cuba's attitude has helped foster that attitude. We helped them find the solution last time. It created a tremendous problem. We were not the ones guilty of illegal departures or of the mass exodus that they talk about. All this is a political maneuver against Cuba. It is a propaganda tool used against Cuba. All those who organized would receive them as heroes. That is an instrument to [words indistinct] the situation was much more difficult, as we have already explained. The blockade was reinforced. There was a compulsion toward mass migration. Therefore, we did not create the problem.

We practically went on (?strike). We realized that we certainly could not guard the U.S. coastline. That was not our problem. We authorize the departure of anyone who wants to leave the country when they receive a visa. The problem was that they were granting practically no visas, less than 1,000 per year. The deterioration of the economic situation, the encouragement that they received through all the radio stations and all types of coaxing, and the exaltation of the deed itself all encouraged the mass migration.

As I explained on that occasion, the number kept growing. In 1990, 2,000 tried to leave the country illegally. In the first quarter of 1994, more than 15,000 had already tried. We recorded 30,000 attempts to leave the country that year. With the combination of all these

factors...[pauses] We did not create the problem. The situation was already created.

Nevertheless, our position is to negotiate, discuss, and find solutions. It had to be done relatively quickly. Although there was little time to talk, a solution to the problem was found. If not, the situation on bases in places like Panama would continue to worsen. We understood that it was necessary to find a solution. Our contribution and cooperation in formulating that agreement helped solve the problem. The problem was regenerating itself. Since it had not been totally solved, the consequences of that one...[pauses] Certain categories of people began to be taken and others were given hope. That happened twice.

We know that the press and many serious people in the United States recognize the equanimity and seriousness with which Cuba has acted and the seriousness and efficiency with which Cuba has fulfilled its part of the agreement without the use of force. That was the most admirable part of all. I believe that this has elevated Cuba's prestige in the eyes of many political personalities, intellectuals, and writers. All this is an element that nullifies the efforts against Cuba in the sense of greater hostility and aggressiveness against Cuba. Yes, this is a byproduct of all this.

[Fernandez] Bolivian Foreign Minister Antonio Aranibar and Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina signed a joint communique and various cooperation agreements minutes before this interview. The head of Bolivian diplomacy returned to Bolivia today after an intense three-day visit to Cuba. [end recording]

Further on Castro Comments

PA0705215295 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 1848 GMT 7 May 95

[Report by Ulises Canales]

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 7 May (PL)—President Fidel Castro said here that Cuba's responsibility and efficiency in the migration negotiations with the United States increased the island's prestige and countered attempts to tighten the economic blockade.

"In the eyes of many politicians, intellectuals, and U.S. editors, Cuba's prestige has increased. All this contradicts efforts in the opposite direction to increase hostility and aggression against our country," the president stated, commenting on the recent migration agreement with Washington, which he termed a more reasonable agreement.

The head of state was interviewed by the press in the garden of the Bolivian Embassy in Havana, where last night he attended a reception to mark the signing of two economic and commercial agreements between both nations. The agreements were signed by Foreign Ministers Roberto Robaina (Cuba) and Antonio Aranibar (Bolivia).

Questioned on the complementary agreement announced last Tuesday by the Governments of Cuba and the United States on emigration, Fidel Castro said it would have been impossible without the understanding and cooperation of his country, which he considered the most flexible in light of a problem created against its will.

He explained that the decision of President William Clinton's administration to confine thousands of people (women, children, the elderly, and the sick) to Guantanamo Naval Base in the southeastern part of the island, people who left Cuba illegally last August, resulted in overcrowding and irritation among those confined there.

Several of the nearly 25,000 Cuban "rafters" were involved in disturbances and conflicts both in Panama, where some of the emigrants were taken, and within the military enclave of Guantanamo, which since the beginning of the century has been in the hands of the United States, despite the Havana Government's demand for its return. In desperation, several emigrants jumped the fence and crossed the mine field surrounding the camps.

"Our willingness to negotiate, to discuss, to seek formulas, resulted in a solution to the problem. Otherwise, the base and Panama would have continued to swell with emigrants, because the problem was beginning to repeat itself, given that the consequences which prompted the exodus had not been totally resolved," the Cuban president stressed.

He added that the U.S. authorities' decision to allow some Cubans who had been in Guantanamo to enter the United States based on certain selection criterion created a situation that encouraged new illegal emigration. It had begun to create an illusion.

Some people are not willing to wait a long time to leave, while others would not qualify to travel legally to that country, he noted.

Illegal migration attempts were beginning, encouraged by the fact that so many thousands had been taken from the base. He said that if they took children, women, the elderly, and the sick, then the others believed this was a passport to travel to the United States.

The fact is, he added, when the United States tried to solve some of these problems, they just created conditions for more illegal departures and an increase in the number of refugees. The situation then "could only be solved with understanding and cooperation from our country."

Fidel Castro highlighted that the concerted effort benefited the two countries. Cuba "benefited from the orderly, legal emigration and from the solution of the base situation." "They," he noted, "concluded that as long as those coming from Cuba and those coming from any other part of the world were treated differently, there would be a compelling element to encourage departures."

He indicated that the Clinton administration's concern about the situation grew in the proportion that U.S. public opposition to illegal immigration spread. He added that "no one gained anything from that; neither them or us,"

Fidel Castro recalled that before the 9 September 1994 agreement, the attitude of several successive U.S. administrations encouraged people to commit crimes, such as commandeering boats or illegal departures on dangerous means of transportation. Once the agreement was signed, the situation was such that it convinced the parties of the benefits of making the joint statement of last 2 May.

The document provides, among other things, for the transfer of a majority of the "rafters" at the Guantanamo Naval Station and for the return to Cuba of all illegal emigrants intercepted on land or sea, without subjecting them to penalties.

Castro: Helms Bill Raises People's 'Awareness'

*PA0705215395 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish
1908 GMT 7 May 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 7 May (PL)—Cuban President Fidel Castro has condemned the attempts of Republican Senator Jesse Helms to tighten the U.S. economic blockade against the island but also said that given its anti-Cuban ends, it raises the awareness of the people.

In statements to the press last night while attending a reception at the Bolivian Embassy in this capital, the president said that he neither favors nor fears the draft bill the ultraconservative senator is trying to push through the U.S. Congress.

The rejection of that proposal has become a banner of struggle for our people, Fidel Castro stated, commenting on the parliamentary hearings and dialogue in different sectors of Cuban society to discuss and divulge the essence of the proposal, considered aggressive and detrimental to the sovereignty and independence of this country.

In a sarcastic tone, the head of state asserted that "Mr. Helms is doing the revolution a favor. The revolution will have to thank him some day for the considerable degree of increased awareness because it informs us, it educates us about the significance of that reactionary and imperialist policy that still prevails in some sectors of the United States."

Deputies, journalists, artists, workers, students, lawyers, workers in general have discussed for one week the paragraphs of what they call "a macabre machination" that attempts to destroy the social project in force since 1959.

The Helms bill establishes, among other things, the return of properties that before their nationalization belonged to U.S. citizens or Cubans residing in the

United States. Additionally, it puts pressure on third countries to try to force them to abstain from trading with the island.

Radio Reports Castro's Comments

PA0805012095 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 0000 GMT 8 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cuban President Fidel Castro has affirmed that someday U.S. legislators Jesse Helms and Dan Burton will have to be thanked for the degree of awareness the bill they want to pass is creating among the Cuban people.

The chief of state said this at a news conference held during a reception Saturday for Bolivian Foreign Minister Antonio Aranibar who returned today, Sunday, to his country after a visit to the island.

The Cuban leader praised the public meetings held throughout the Caribbean island that allowed all the people to learn the details of the anti-Cuban bill. He reiterated that juridical projects such as this proposed by Helms and Burton demonstrate the aggressive and reactionary attitude that prevails in some U.S. sectors.

Referring to migration agreements reached by Havana and Washington, Fidel said a tense situation arose during the talks and was resolved thanks to the cooperation and understanding of the Cuban authorities who were flexible.

Fidel Castro said the purpose of these agreements is not to open doors for other agreements between the two nations, but, he said, they can improve the atmosphere and reduce existing tensions.

The Cuban president said the signing of the agreement heightened Cuba's prestige internationally, and this counteracts efforts some forces are making to promote hostility and aggressiveness against the Caribbean island.

Journalists Union Discusses Helms-Burton Bill

FL0505135195 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0000 GMT 5 May 95

[From the "NTV" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Cuban Journalists Union met this afternoon to discuss the Helms-Burton bill. Ricardo Alarcon was present at the meeting held at the International Press Center. Cuban journalists realize they are responsible for the important task of informing every Cuban about the contents, objectives, and dangerous intentions of the Helms-Burton bill. The press must expose the monstrosity cooking in the U.S. Congress, and explain to our compatriots that the blockade, the Torricelli Law, and the Helms-Burton bill all have one objective: to destroy the Cuban Revolution and the conquests of our people.

[Begin recording] [First unidentified journalist] Comrades, we as journalists must assume the major responsibility of spreading information. I think it is more effective if we focus on one aspect of the task. I believe it would be rewarding if we wrote about the barbarisms that the bill includes. Without adding commentaries or analysis because the bill speaks for itself.

[Second unidentified journalist] We must put the bill and its creator into context, because it identifies, even for the most elementary reader or listener, the type of people who are behind these matters.

[Alarcon] Just think for a moment what this would mean: Aside from your house, your school, or child's school; aside from the hospital, the community center; apart from the peasant's land; aside from the worker's factory; aside from all this; think how much sacrifice, sweat, and effort generations of Cubans have to make to give people resources of this magnitude. We are talking about \$100 billion [cien mil millones]. It is easy to say. In English you say \$100 billion [billones] which equals to \$100,000 million. This means the slavery of the people who must pay that tribute to the empire, and that is unthinkable. That is why it is little to say that those who are designing Cuba's future are actually planning Cuba's past. Those who seek to destroy the revolution to return Cuba, to its past, would not stop at that. They would seek the colonization of Cuba. It would be the disappearance of the Cuban nation. It would mean slavery for the Cuban people. [end recording]

In its final minutes, NTV will rebroadcast the speech by Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government, at the parliamentary public hearing on the Helms-Burton Bill. The complete text of his speech will be printed in GRANMA on Saturday [6 May].

Country Concerned About Tougher U.S. Migration Policies*PA0605043695 Mexico City REFORMA in Spanish
5 May 95 p 1A***[Report by Rodolfo Montes]**

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Relations Secretary Jose Angel Gurria last night said that Mexico is concerned about the toughening of U.S. migration policies and urged U.S. authorities not to violate the human and labor rights of Mexicans.

"Mexico is concerned about the toughening of the U.S. position on this (migration) issue, which has been considered quite sensitive. We recognize that the U.S. Government has the right to enforce its migration laws, but with the restriction that this enforcement must not violate the human and labor rights of our fellow nationals," Gurria pointed out.

The government of President Bill Clinton on 3 May submitted to the U.S. Congress a migration bill stipulating the repatriation of foreigners to the interior of Mexico and Canada and up to 20 years imprisonment for smugglers of illegal aliens. Likewise, the bill includes fines of up to \$500 a day for illegal aliens who do not leave the United States.

The foreign secretary stressed that in this regard, the people of the United States must respect the dignity of Mexicans as individuals.

Labor Secretary: Growth Needed To Reduce Unemployment*PA0605195895 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish
2149 GMT 4 May 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Mexico City, 4 May (NOTIMEX)—Mexican Labor Secretary Santiago Onate Labore said today that because the national economy has shown virtually zero growth, the current unemployment level, which is below that of other countries, will be maintained.

Onate, who granted an interview before the opening of the Economic Pact weekly meeting, said growth levels of 7 to 8 percent are required to overcome the problem.

To make room for the manpower joining the workforce each year, "the economic growth rate must surpass population growth." We must also define strategies that will help generate more jobs, the official added.

He emphasized the need to promote other types of development and activities that will generate income for whoever implements them and to have a stable economic framework conducive to growth.

Onate Labore explained that product price increases are linked to increased raw material prices and production costs.

The labor secretary said the Trade Secretariat must review prices and said that any authorized price increases should be explained before the Economic Pact meeting.

Route 100, EZLN Rule of Law Issues*95CA0217A Mexico City REFORMA in Spanish
16 Apr 95 p 7A*

[Commentary by Miguel Angel Granados Chapa, journalist and citizen counselor of the Federal Electoral Institute's General Council: "Justice"]

[FBIS Translated Text] With greater clarity than in other cases, we can presume that the arrest of attorney Ricardo Barco and his possible trial are the result of manipulation of the judicial machinery. This is demonstrated by the courage of former Judge Abraham Polo Uscanga, who gave up his seat on the bench rather than allow Barco to be arrested despite the absence of the elements required by law. Nevertheless, someone was found who was more amenable and the adviser to the Route 100 Union has now been formally taken prisoner.

Polo Uscanga graduated from UNAM [National Autonomous University of Mexico] and the Free School of Law. His thesis on "the subjective element of the notion of injustice" demonstrated his inclination toward criminal law. After a phase devoted to the private practice of his profession, he became a public prosecutor in the Federal District, where he became an expert on procedure, particularly the preliminary investigation phase. In that field, he held every possible post: department head, deputy director [in the Federal District Public Prosecutor's Office], general director, deputy attorney general. On 1 January 1990, he was appointed to serve on the Superior Court of Justice and assigned to the Eighth Chamber.

In that capacity, he heard the case involving an accusation filed against Barco by 255 former members of the Route 100 Union. When they lost their jobs after the 1989 strike movement, which Federal District officials now call a union settlement of accounts, those workers received the amount of their compensation directly. However, elements outside the union induced them to initiate litigation aimed at obtaining the refund of contributions paid in while belonging to the union. Such a return was improper inasmuch as the respective trust clearly provides that resources deposited therein are exclusively earmarked for one of three purposes: death benefits, the construction of union premises, and the strike support fund. Nowhere is it provided that contributors leaving the union will have the amount of their contributions refunded to them, much less the proportional interest on trust capital. It must be noted that such resources are usually used in unions at the discretion of the leaders and thus, in order to avoid any such discretionary spending in Sutauro-100 [United Trade Union of Route 100 Workers], a decision was made to set up a trust, which presumes the participation of a bank that executes only those transactions ordered by an expert committee.

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Defeated in their attempt to have the proportional amount of the trust funds refunded to them via commercial and labor channels, those affected focused their efforts on the courts. They filed a claim with the Public Prosecutor's Office in 1990, but it was not heard, either because there were no grounds or because of the proverbially slow pace of the judicial process. The fact is that only under the present administration did the wheels begin to move on the case. In December of last year, Barco and several other union officials were finally indicted, but on 9 January, the judge of the 16th Chamber refused to issue the corresponding arrest warrants for lack of the elements needed to proceed. The Public Prosecutor's Office appealed and the case was turned over to the Eighth Chamber, and the judge who wrote the opinion turned out to be Polo Uscanga. On 8 March, the judge issued a ruling less drastic than that of the examining magistrate, in whose eyes there was no crime, but which ordered that the Public Prosecutor's Office should be asked to submit more evidence. By taking such a position, Polo Uscanga was heeding both extremes. On the one hand, he did not order the arrest of the persons indicted, but on the other, he did not cancel the right of the parties wronged to continue their search for justice.

While the two magistrates who along with Polo Uscanga preside over the Eighth Chamber were studying the ruling, according to the account given to "Reforma, Proceso y La Jornada" by the former judge himself, the presiding magistrate of the Superior Court of Justice, Saturnino Aguero Aguirre, called Polo Uscanga on 23 March asked him to revoke his ruling, which, in practical terms, meant issuing the arrest warrants. It was impossible to do so according to the law, and the then judge so informed the still presiding magistrate. Inasmuch as this was the third time that Aguero Aguirre had intervened in cases submitted to him and already nearing retirement, Polo Uscanga decided to beat him to the draw, disillusioned with that manner of imparting justice. As is the custom at this level of the government, he was allowed to retain his official automobile until his new legal situation took effect on 1 July. However, when he resolved to make the cause of his departure from the Court public, the vehicle was taken away from him as a petty display of the irritation caused by his untimely account of the facts. He was also the victim of telephone threats.

In the meantime, other less demanding officials "entertained" (the term used in judicial jargon, although it has other connotations in common speech) the request from the Public Prosecutor's Office, and attorney Barco and five other union officials (Octaviano Sanchez Palma, Adalberto Loza Gutierrez, Filemon Ponce Zeron, Eduardo Hernandez Quiroz and Cristobal Flores de la Huerta), against whom, in Polo Uscanga's opinion, there were no grounds for legal action, were arrested and ordered held. Proceedings instituted in such manifest violation of the law thus take on a clear political hue.

This view is supported by the way in which this episode in the history of the Federal District began a week ago. The declaration of bankruptcy, the pretext used ten years

ago to break the Aeromexico union, was challenged legally, as was one of its sequels: the termination of Route 100's labor relations. It is apparent that no quick solution will be forthcoming because of the workers' decision, widely supported, that none would accept compensation, much less offer to work for the new enterprise providing transport service in Mexico City and the surrounding area. The very act of rehiring and the new contracts presents legal difficulties because no administrative or commercial entity is yet operating the service, yet someone is assuming liabilities in its name.

Thousands of persons are flooding the hiring modules. A solid social conscience should prevent anyone from contributing to the misfortune of a group of workers struck by illegality. However, it is a great deal to ask the unemployed, new or old, to scorn this possibility of finding the jobs they so urgently need. As a result, unaware of the cause behind this unexpected chance to be hired, they put in their job applications, which are received with the overpowering certainty that neither judges nor lawmakers will be able to modify by their actions the ultimate meaning of the measures, which is breaking the union.

This arrogance was demonstrated by the inexplicable decision to use members of the Federal District Police as drivers for the new urban transport service. If that group enjoyed prestige, the act of making them participate would be worthy of applause because they would add a factor of safety and respect. However, the bad reputation of this corps forces us to see in the measure, not any intention of achieving efficiency, but rather, the expectation that the authorities' dispute with the Sataur-100 workers will continue for a long time to come and might turn violent.

Actually, by placing the Route 100 dispute in a political rather than legal context (violations of the law are obvious), the government places itself in an extremely difficult situation. It has clearly resolved to confront the Independent Proletarian Movement and its connections with armed Zapatism by cutting off its sources of financing. There is nothing new in the politicization of the Route 100 union and the fact that it has political motivations going far beyond its strictly trade union purpose. Indeed, the official unions have paid dues to the ruling party for decades. However, the government was not accustomed to dealing with aggressive, autonomous trade unionism backed by substantial funds and opposed to any official control. If at any time the freedom to shift politically of Sataur-100 and the MPI runs counter to the government's guidelines for social control, the latter has resolved, with all the more reason, to take steps against those organizations in the critical times in which we live. Which is why the curtain has not yet fallen on this political face-off because the Route 100 workers will not simply give up and resign themselves to being dumped into unemployment or let their organization be destroyed by legal sophistries that have already been exposed.

Other legal subtleties have been advanced and achieved partial success in the case of alleged or real Zapatistas jailed over two months ago. The groups that were held in police jails have watched that lengthy period of time go by without knowing where to turn, inasmuch as no action has been instituted against them because of incomprehensible horsetrading between judicial authorities. In the other cases, trials have moved forward: Gloria Maria Benavides obtained partial relief from the Federal courts: Instead of being tried for four crimes, she will now be tried for only two. Nevertheless, inconsistencies remain in her trial. The accuser disappeared, i.e., Odilon Hernandez did not appear in court to confirm his accusation and confront the accused, who is not being tried for the robbery allegedly committed against him, but rather, for possession of an unlawful weapon and rebellion. Unless they were planted, it appears to be true that Mrs. Benavides' arsenal was made up of two pistols whose use is restricted to the Armed Forces. On the other hand, it is inadmissible that she be tried for rebellion based on the assumption of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judge that she belongs to the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). The accusation would make sense only if there were proof of her membership in that armed group, which did indeed revolt, as shown by its first summons from the Lacandon Forest. However, there is a serious contradiction in the act of trying a member of a group when similar action is not taken against the group itself. Actually, the EZLN has never been on trial and even now, political negotiations are underway with that group, this at the prompting of those practicing conduct classified as "rebellion."

On the other hand, Jorge Santiago Santiago, who is also accused of belonging to the EZLN, was released due to the precariousness of the proceedings instituted against him. Jorge Javier Elorriaga should enjoy the same fate, but he is still in Tuxtla Gutierrez' Cerro Hueco Prison. Both were indicted based on the spontaneous and strange declaration of Salvador Morales Garibay, who, because of his likely membership in the EZLN, provided the Public Prosecutor's Office with a long list of Zapatist figures. However, Morales Garibay did not respond to the summons he received to appear before Tuxtla Gutierrez' court on Friday, the 7th, or Sunday, the 10th. He has disappeared, and not only has his absence left the accusations he made groundless, because he did not confirm them, but it generates an additional conflict, that of the disappearance itself. The EZLN may have castigated his accusation, for which reason he has disappeared. However, if such a hypothesis is true, the revolt the government would have provoked would be uncontrollable, inasmuch as it would then have a new weapon to discredit armed Zapatism. Consequently, his absence can apparently be traced to the Public Prosecutor's Office, which is said to have compensated in this way for the flood of information with which Morales Garibay provided it, unless his name was simply put on an account whose elements actually came from national security investigations.

Whatever the case, it is always good news to hear that a person falsely accused has gone free. The release of Santiago Santiago was followed within hours by that of Ciudad Juarez Mayor Francisco Villarreal Torres on the opposite side of the country. The judge who heard his case did not await the end of the legal deadline, but issued the release order just after midnight, although the municipal official elected to stay in his cell until morning.

This political triumph of the Juarez people and the National Action Party (PAN) will be a new milestone in PAN's ability to help generate new political relations. Its notion of authentic federalism will be strengthened by the legal decision that found no crime in a petition, translated into action, seeking to claim from the Federation resources generated in the localities that need them.

El Barzon's 'Political' Aims Cited

95CA0219A Mexico City LA JORNADA in Spanish
27 Apr 95 p 23

[Article by Matilde Perez U.]

[FBIS Translated Text] Upon signing a consultation agreement with the National Bar Association, El Barzon has ceased to be a payment resistance group and is now acting within the law, without giving up peaceful civil mobilization, declared the movement's national coordinator, Juan Jose Quirino Salas.

Addressing representatives and members of the El Barzon National Union of Agricultural, Commercial, and Industrial Producers and Service Providers from 30 states in the country, Quirino Salas emphasized that from now on all legal means will be used to prevent debtors from being stripped of their property. "We will do everything conceivable and possible within the law to make sure that bankers do not take away property, which is the fruit of years of effort."

He indicated that among the first actions to be taken is to obtain the release of 3,700 persons who are being held in jail as criminals, but who in fact are debtors apprehended to exert pressure for debt payment. "It is imperative that measures be implemented to defend these people from the pressure of bankers," he stated. He announced that five types of legal remedy will be sought immediately to bring to light the financial abuses being perpetrated by the banking industry and the government, and thus to force them to purge the current portfolio of overdue loans. Between June 1994 and the first months of this year, according to figures compiled by business organizations and the graduate school at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), that portfolio grew from 75,000 to 112.5 billion new pesos. In addition to that amount, there is another 5 billion new pesos resulting from the failure of the Overdue Loan Restructuring Systems.

He indicated that the aforementioned five types of legal action that will be taken in 400,000 cases are: declaration

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of annulment of the contracts between banks and debtors, usury complaints filed against banks, writs of amparo filed against the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit and the Bank of Mexico, and making payments on principal by depositing with a judge certificates of deposit made out to the National Finance Bank (Nafin).

This also includes encouraging banks to enter into agreements with debtors to purge their debts, eliminating any illegal charges; and, over the next six months, spurring officials to hear approximately 200 cases in each state that are awaiting action.

Upon signing the agreement, the president of the National Bar Association, Javier Gomez Corral, stated that from now on, El Barzon will stay within the law in its fight against bankers, who have already made enough money off of the people; now it is time for them to pay their fair share. "We do not want them to lose money, we just want them to give up a little of their earnings for the sake of the people."

The banks will be paid what they are owed, he added, but without interest, because the interest rates they charge are usurious. It will be up to judicial authorities to investigate and decide in favor of whoever is in the right according to the law.

Liliana Flores Benavides, spokesperson for the executive committee of El Barzon, commented that the intellectual and academic community, members of the United States Congress, and even the Council of the Americas (which represents the 300 largest transnationals or corporations in the world) regard El Barzon as a grassroots movement of conscience.

She commented that in meetings between members of El Barzon and various social and official groups in Washington, El Barzon was compared with Solidarity in

Poland, which has used civil resistance and peaceful means and which regards the law as a tool in its struggle. "They see it as a movement that will influence the transition to a new Mexico, not only economically, but also politically and socially. We feel that there is a friendly and positive attitude toward the movement."

She noted, however, that there are conflicting positions within those circles. For example, the Council of the Americas, which considers the neoliberal model to be a success, is convinced that nothing will happen in Mexico over the next 15 years, that "there will not be any problem."

"They agreed to meet with us," explained Flores Benavides, because "they want to take the social pulse of Mexico," not just the government's view, and that is how El Barzon officials discovered that "in the Council of the Americas and the U.S. Congress, where the line of credit for Mexico is being debated, a great variety of arguments are being put forward to oppose giving Mexico the money." What they want is for the international financial system to be allowed to establish a presence in Mexico, not over a period of 15 years, as provided in NAFTA [North America Free Trade Agreement], but in the shorter term.

It was learned that this year Mexico's debt will reach \$93 billion, and that the \$68 billion obtained by the Mexican Government is \$25 billion short of what is needed. "No one is willing to lend one thin dime this year."

Mexicans' ability to put food on the table is at risk, she declared, so a contingency plan should be devised for planting crops this year, and a comprehensive program should be developed to protect our food sovereignty.

Argentina

Menem: Same Cabinet To Continue After 14 May Elections

PY0605012695 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 0050 GMT 6 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Buenos Aires, 5 May (TELAM)—President Carlos Menem tonight stressed that it has been affirmed that the current cabinet will continue with the government's policies after 14 May, but he also stated that during the next mandate "other ministries" will be created.

"If I win with the same team, then the same team continues; the thing is, we are going to regulate the ministries law and create (some new ones) without increasing public expenditures," Menem said. Over America TV Television of the city of Junin, he stated that the current Social Development Secretariat "will become a ministry, because it deals with the people."

Man Shoots at Presidential Motorcade; Menem Unharmed

PA0605222395 Paris AFP in Spanish 2059 GMT 6 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Rosario, Argentina, 6 May (AFP)—The privately-owned DYN News Service has reported that an unidentified individual fired three shots close to the vehicle in which President Carlos Menem was touring this city, 300 km northeast of Buenos Aires, during his electoral campaign for the 14 May elections.

Menem, who is touring the Argentinian countryside in a specially outfitted vehicle christened "Menemobile," was in the upper part of the vehicle and suffered no injuries whatsoever.

The gunshots caused alarm among those who were out to watch the president go by, but security personnel who surrounded the president immediately arrested the unidentified individual, while Menem asked onlookers to remain calm.

The incident took place in Rosario's southeast suburb. The attacker's identity was not disclosed nor was the direction of the fired shots.

The unidentified man seemed drunk when he fired the gun, according to witnesses, DYN said.

'Record' Number of Labor Conflicts Reported

95SM0307C Buenos Aires LA NACION in Spanish 10 Apr 95 p 10

[Article by Fernando Laborda—first paragraph is LA NACION introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Teachers

Teachers, along with government workers, led the majority of the 142 labor actions, the highest figure in one month since convertibility.

Last March the highest number of labor conflicts took place since the start of the convertibility plan in February 1991.

All over Argentina, 142 labor actions were reported: 48 work stoppages, 46 mobilizations, 16 declarations of alert status, seven peaceful occupations, 21 protests, and four new forms of protest.

These data are from a survey conducted by the CISI [Independent Social Research Consultants] to which LA NACION was given access.

If the labor actions between March 1994 and March 1995 (1108) are compared with those conducted in the same period ending in 1994, there were 124 additional actions, a 13 percent increase in labor conflicts.

Teachers, with 42 labor actions, head the list of the most combative unions.

They are followed by government workers, with 34 protests, and far behind, by judicial and municipal workers, both with seven protests each.

It should be pointed out that the unions engaging in the most conflicts are members of the combative CTA [Argentine Workers Congress], not the CGT [General Confederation of Labor].

Cordoba was the province reporting the most conflicts during March, as it had 13.3 percent of the total labor actions; it was followed by Tucuman, with 11.9 percent; Rio Negro, 11.2 percent; and La Rioja, 8 percent.

Agreement

This report agrees with a similar survey conducted by the Union for the New Majority Research Center, which adds that teachers' salary demands at the start of classes and the provinces' spending adjustments were the causes of this phenomenon in March.

The analysis of labor disputes in March over the last 15 years shows that this year's figure is the highest since 1991, but it is below the level recorded between 1987 and 1991.

Payment Delays

According to the CISI, the causes of the labor conflicts in March were: wages, 63.9 percent; political-ideological, 20.5 percent; job positions, 8.2 percent; personnel adjustments, 4.9 percent; and working conditions, 2.5 percent.

Delays in wage payments was the cause most often cited by unions that conducted labor actions. This factor

caused 53 percent of the total conflicts, which sets a record since the start of monetary convertibility.

The second most cited cause was relations with the state. This includes requests for an increased budget and protests of government decrees: 14 percent of the total.

Requests for wage increases were somewhat farther down the list, causing 9 percent of the protests.

Layoffs

During the month analyzed, a total of 2,883 layoffs took place. Metalworkers were the most affected, losing 1,014 jobs. They were followed by banking workers, with 600 dismissals; construction, 270; and DGI [General Directorate of Taxation] workers, 200 layoffs.

The Banking Association reported 200 voluntary departures by workers.

Additional new information is related to personnel suspensions, which came to a total of 8,017, according to the CISI report. The majority of these were in the automotive industry: there were 4,000 in Ciadea and 3,500 in Sevel [expansions not given].

Labor Leaders on Future Strategies

Protagonists for Change

95SM0303A Buenos Aires CLARIN in Spanish
12 Apr 95 pp 16-17

[Article by Victor de Gennaro, head of the CTA—first paragraph is editorial introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] The technological revolution and increasingly high unemployment rates seem to be exerting pressure on the traditional trade unions, requiring that they adopt different strategies to meet the demands of the workers. This is what the three trade union leaders whose views appear on these pages believe, although they differ notably as to how to deal with the changes that are coming. Cassia, the head of the CGT [General Confederation of Labor]; Palacios, the head of the MTA [Argentine Workers' Movement]; and De Gennaro, the head of the CTA [Argentine Workers' Congress] represent the three major factions into which the Argentine trade union movement is currently divided.

What role the trade unions should play is a subject that concerns the entire community, not just certain leaders. The CTA election scheduled for 6 June is intended to convert this concern into an action as a protagonist. The polls indicate that society as a whole, and, therefore, a great many workers, no longer believes in the trade unions. And unfortunately, there are good reasons for this lack of confidence.

On the one hand, organizations that were established when full employment and a vast domestic market was the reigning condition, and which negotiated with businessmen by enterprise branch and could rely on laws that

protected the workers against any abuses, cannot be equally efficient in a country where there is no industry, unemployment stands at 12 percent, the state lacks structure, and the "labor" legislation favors the interests of the owners. They are even less efficient when these owners are economic groups that coordinate their actions in various branches of industry and control trade and finance.

Faced with this situation, not only the trade unions, but all organizations, have plunged into crisis. And crisis situations render it compulsory to make a choice. Some leaders have committed themselves to rescuing the trade union structures as if they were businesses, even at the expense of their comrades. They have opted to be "board-of-directors shareholders" instead of representatives of the workers. Others of us are continuing to recruit comrades into the trade unions, so that we can face up to the day-to-day difficulties with organization and proposals. With or without a structure, in the Ministry of Labor or in the streets, in Palapa, in Villa Constitucion, or in the Mataderos slum, we are reasserting the fact that the trade union is not the milieu for leaders' lives. The trade union is made up of those of us who are organized workers waging the struggle for satisfaction of our demands in order to transform society.

Here and There

And there is no valid end-of-the-century argument here. In Argentina in 1995, just as in England in the era of the Industrial Revolution, the trade unions either defend the rights of the worker class or they are not trade unions. The CTA has proposed a new organization to carry out this ancient mandate.

Our proposal is based on: 1) rebuilding the unity of the working class by bringing together the comrades with secure jobs, part-time workers, retirees, the unemployed and the underemployed, either through their trade unions or federations or on an individual basis; 2) electing all of the leaders—local, provincial, and national—by direct and secret ballots cast by each of the members; 3) asserting our autonomy with regard to the political parties, the business owners, and the state.

Based on these principles, we will not only improve our "image," but will also cease to be mere statistics in the surveys on unemployment, and can again become a collective protagonist with the ability to influence (forcefully) the resolution of the dramatic situation we workers and the people are experiencing—regional economies in crisis; wage losses; and lack of health care, education, and welfare provisions.

In brief, in view of the failure of the government policies, we propose the effective democratization of our society in its economic, political, social, and cultural aspects. As opposed to "every man for himself," our aspiration is to build an Argentina for everyone.

Role of Unions

95SM0303B Buenos Aires CLARIN in Spanish
12 Apr 95 pp 16-17

[Article by Juan Manuel Palacios, head of the MTA]

[FBIS Translated Text] Those who believe that the history of the trade union movement is approaching its end do not understand its nature, or even how old it is. "I shall return, and there will be millions of me," Spartacus cried during the first organized rebellion of the slaves. Eva Peron took up this cry, and in an initial stage in Argentina, rebellion could be peacefully overcome by means of social justice. But the "model" devoured this justice and cast it out. This issue is still pending, and while the demand for justice survives, it will nurture trade union activity. Disraeli maintained that people are not united either by language or by religion, but by shared interests. On a parallel basis, the same is true of individuals, and this is emphasized among those who survive on a daily basis thanks to their own brave personal labors.

In the course of their historical development, the trade unions have contributed to social progress by improving their members' quality of life, but like any kind of organization, they have generated the internal vices, shortcomings, and petty evils characteristic of any structure. In this connection, a comparison with the political parties suffices. This also happens among the trade union leaders whose task it is to administer the formal power of the workers. These leaders, who have been diverted from their goal and have become divorced from those they represent, enter into compromises and prostitute the concept of "negotiation," favoring their own interests and placing them above those of the individuals they represent. And if doubt exists, observe what is happening in the CGT.

Readaptation

The trade union movement will undergo monumental readjustments as a result of the "new" level of flexibility, and, in particular, many trade union leaders will find themselves on the road to unemployment, since "job sources" will be lost. When it first developed, the trade union movement was not in such a good position. At that time there were no laws—none at all, and its goal was to see that laws were established and observed. In the future, unemployment will not lead to a state of "nirvana," least of all in these underdeveloped climes. Instead it will culminate in a more violent society, and that will happen because of the very force of events themselves.

This is more than sufficient reason to consider the problem and resolve it, not from the point of view of public assistance, but rather by giving each what is due him. This will lead the workers' movement into an unquestionable role characterized by protagonism and

social control, so that it will no longer become "negligible" following each electoral situation. Nor will the trade union movement become a political party, but it will indeed—as it has in the past—become a political movement, in the sense that on each occasion, it will rally together those who will join with it, and it will work to reconcile the antagonistic interests and social tensions that coexist in any democratic society. These conflicts will continue to exist, but each force will have to grant the other what it requires. And as they will have to survive, no interest group will crush the other, as is visibly happening now, with the trade union leadership showing patience and keeping silent.

Protest Said Not Proper Path

95SM0303C Buenos Aires CLARIN in Spanish
12 Apr 95 pp 16-17

[Article by Antonio Cassia, head of the CGT]

[FBIS Translated Text] We are stating nothing new when we assert that the world is changing with giant strides, that production factors are being altered on a daily basis, and that with each passing second, a new technological advance reduces the volume of manpower needed and increases the level of skill required.

Our country is suffering, to a greater or lesser extent, from these changes that we might call evolutionary or involutionary, depending on the profound philosophical basis adopted for the analysis of the phenomenon. However, a special characteristic of these changes is that there is an international unemployment crisis due to other causes, and we find ourselves seriously involved in it.

Tactics and Strategies

Within this context, the trade union leadership of today—because tomorrow is already with us—will have to revamp its strategies and tactics, the indispensable elements in making any decision. The "what" it is we want, and the "how" we will achieve it, the old pairing of the means and the end, require basic definitions. For example, we must define the role the workers will play in the new society that is coming. Special mention was made of this aspect recently at the International Conference on Poverty organized by the United Nations, and it was concluded that the reformulation of the social contract is an urgent requirement for the civilized nations.

Promoting training, generating replacement options for the current manpower force, intensifying the exchange of experience—these are among the initiatives that a trade union movement adapted to the present circumstances should promote. However, this should not be taken to be all that is involved in its role as a legitimate source of pressure, although in this connection, we could continue to debate forever whether we should adopt a combative or conciliatory approach.

Social Peace

The General Confederation of Labor of the Argentine Republic believes that the trade union movement should

reflect the desire for social peace that is to be found among the workers, rather than generating a reactionary spirit, because this is simplistic and hinders participation in the development of decisions of overwhelming importance.

Participation can be viewed as a way of facilitating the advance of the employers' desires, or as the best way of making the best of the inevitable. Or are there those, perhaps, who think that by protesting we can prevent technology from carrying us forward? Participation is the path we should follow to ensure that our complaints are heard, to propose improvements, to study the causes and effects of each change, to encourage worker participation in the capital of enterprises. And, in the final analysis, to change the role of the trade union movement from that of an observer so that it can ride the crest of the wave and act as a protagonist in change. The trade union movement of the future must not only make an educational effort within itself, but must also wage a determined effort with those outside it, because just as we workers accept the inevitability of change, so must the business community, which in these climes is unaccustomed to accepting its role as a tool in a better system. The humanization of capital so ardently preached in the teachings of the church in recent years appears to be a much more difficult goal to achieve than any other we might impose upon ourselves.

There are many major enterprises throughout the world that have for years been promoting participation by their workers not only as stockholders, but in management itself. Except for the experience resulting from the privatizations, an understanding of this concept in our country still seems very far away. For this reason, we enthusiastically support the proposal at the most recent International Conference on Poverty organized in Denmark by the United Nations that called for the reformulation of the social contract, since the role of the state also needs to be redefined.

Article Discusses UCR 'Crisis'

95SM0308A Buenos Aires LA NACION in Spanish
25 Apr 95 p 9

[Article by Rosendo Fraga, director of the Union for the New Majority Studies Center: "The Crisis in the Radical Movement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 29 November 1993, we said in these same pages that "if the Radical movement supports reelection, it will probably cease to represent the social sectors that are witnessing the accumulation of power in the hands of the government party today with wary concern." And several months later, on 25 August 1994, we asserted that "the crisis in the Radical movement is creating a new scenario in Argentine politics, one that alters the tradition we have had for a century concerning the way our party system operates."

Third Place

With the presidential election on 14 May just days away, the polls consistently indicate that the Radical platform is

running third, and that this movement is on the way to experiencing its worst presidential election results since 1916.

Without attempting to analyze whether the crisis is of a circumstantial or episodic nature, or whether we are faced with the final days of a political structure that requires a majority, as was the case with conservatism in 1946, this crisis does reflect the loss of the historic significance that characterized the Radical Civic Union (UCR) for more than a century.

The historic role of the Radical movement has been closely linked with the struggle for the vote—initially, for universal, secret, and compulsory balloting; then against fraudulent practices; and in recent decades, against the interruptions in democratic life caused by de facto governments.

Argentina is preparing to hold its third consecutive presidential election since 1983, and its fourth consecutive gubernatorial election. The country has not experienced a democratic process that has lasted this long since 1928. But the prospects for democracy in Argentina appear much more solid today than they did then, when only two years after the third consecutive presidential election following the promulgation of the Saenz Pena Law, the first successful military coup in the constitutional history of Argentina occurred.

And so it is that today, the struggle for free suffrage and the prevalence of democracy represent a goal achieved for Argentine society. And it is probable that the crisis in the Radical movement reflects the final stage in the reaching of that goal, which gave it life for more than a century.

The Voice of the Middle Class

The other aspect of the profound significance of the Radical movement in Argentine history is the fact that it served as the political-electoral expression of the Argentine middle class. Since the end of the 19th century, it has represented the political participation aspirations of the sons of the immigrants who fought to create a space for themselves in the conservative Argentina of the Generation of the Eighties. Without discounting the popular importance of the Yrigoyen movement, the emergence of Peronism as a popular political force emphasized the role of radicalism as the electoral expression of the middle-class sectors. And so the social and cultural values of the middle class found their identification in the political significance and style of the Radical Civic Union.

But this middle class has been undergoing a process of impoverishment in recent decades, as well as experiencing new economic phenomena such as the coexistence of stability and a more open economy, and the improvement of the relative position of the popular sectors with fixed incomes.

From this point of view, the opportunity for the Radical movement to take on the representation of the middle-class sectors that have been bypassed does theoretically exist. But the Olivos pact marked the contradiction between the Radical movement and the traditional political values of the Argentine middle class.

To channel the electoral aspirations of the middle classes, which had for the first time in the 20th century ceased to feel represented in electoral terms by the Radical movement, there emerged first "Chacho" Alvarez and the Great Front, followed by Bordon and the Frepaso [Front for a Country in Solidarity]. Thus it is no accident that the key concept of the presidential candidate of the Frepaso that won the greatest response from society was his slogan "I want to rebuild the country of the middle class," which is much more rooted in the historic tradition of the Radical movement than in that of Peronism.

Adaptation Problems

While the Justicialist Party succeeded in adapting itself to the changing times, making stability the basis for the maintenance of its traditional electoral influence with the popular sectors, the Radical movement has not succeeded in reorganizing its platform efficiently enough to continue to serve as the political expression of the middle class.

Only time will tell whether the crisis in the Radical movement is circumstantial or terminal. But the major changes Argentina has undergone in recent years, in the economic as well as the social and cultural sectors, will inevitably lead to profound changes in the party system that has existed throughout the 20th century.

Brazil

Alcatel Director Cited on Sivam Project

PY0605035895 Sao Paulo VEJA in Portuguese
3 May 95 p 101

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sivam [The Amazon Region Surveillance System] project, involving radars for monitoring the Amazon region, is mired in several aspects. It is a \$1.7 billion deal already promised to the U.S. company Raytheon, but it has as yet not gone further than the blueprints. There are several stories about espionage and corruption, and about the Brazilian Government favoring companies that do not pay taxes. No one, however, wanted to openly speak about this. Last week, the company Alcatel, a French firm that lost the bid to the Americans, spoke aloud. Alcatel Director General Francois De Laage de Meux will arrive in Brazil this week to discuss the Sivam project. He spoke to VEJA before coming, and accused the Americans of stealing the deal from France through unethical means. "We must recognize that our American friends have a certain talent when it comes to obtaining information. Bill Clinton is directly engaged in the issue, and he uses

diplomacy and agents like those of the CIA to obtain information," de Meux said.

He also admitted that the French paid mediators during the Sivam bidding process. He does not consider that a tip. "You cannot confuse a commission paid to a mediator with using illegal means to obtain privileges," he said. It would be a good thing if he told how much Alcatel paid to in fact verify if nothing irregular happened.

The mission of de Meux is to at least try to obtain a little portion of the Sivam contract. Alcatel, one of the largest telecommunications companies in the world, has already offered to be a subcontractor of Raytheon in the project. Since the contract has not been signed, it apparently is willing to fight a bit more. "We have a very strong structure in Brazil. Our participation in the project will generate jobs here," he said. "Raytheon does not produce anything in Brazil. The American Government put into action a real war apparatus in order to win the contract because it wants to control the Amazon region." De Meux intends to meet in Brasilia with Communications Minister Sergio Motta.

Finance Minister: Distribution of Revenues 'Undemocratic'

PY0505215495 Sao Paulo AGENCIA ESTADO in Portuguese 1732 GMT 5 May 95

[Report by Janice Caetano]

[FBIS Translated Text] Rio de Janeiro, 5 May (AE)—Finance Minister Pedro Malan said recently that the administration will send two bills to Congress next week: one on government expenditures and the other on the fiscal adjustment. The minister made it quite clear he is not satisfied with distribution of government revenues to states and municipalities. Malan said government revenues for the first quarter of 1995 totaled 6.5 billion reales. Of this, 10 percent was allocated to the Federal Government where 20 ministries fought over it. Malan believes the transfer of funds to states and municipalities is not very democratic. The minister said this at the Gloria Hotel where entrepreneurs from all lines of business held a luncheon in his honor.

Referring to the bill on fiscal reform, Malan said the Brazilian tax system is complex and full of loopholes which allow evasion. The minister said the Real Plan had two initial objectives: to lower inflation and to obtain the political support of the population once inflation went down. Now inflation has been defeated, the time has come to seek political support.

Malan admitted that the measures to restrict consumption are not all one would like, adding that they will not be in effect for ever. He said they will be around for as long as they are economically necessary. The minister reported that during the first four months of the year inflation measured by the three main indexes (General Market Price Index, the Economic Research Institute

Foundation index, and the Consumer Price Index-real), stands at 6.2 percent, which he considers good.

Editorial Notes 'Risk' of Economic Deceleration
PY0605022095 Sao Paulo FOLHA DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 28 Apr 95 Section 1 p 2

[Editorial: "The Risk of Braking"]

[FBIS Translated Text] With the additional credit restriction measures that were adopted on 27 April, the government took a new step forward in the battle against consumption growth, which has been considered excessive. The cause for the government concern is obvious: Demand has surpassed supply and has pushed up inflation, while high consumption levels have encouraged imports and worsened the external accounts' imbalance.

In light of the various indications that the general level of economic activities is actually high, the disagreements between the finance and planning ministries over the need for new consumption restriction measures seem to have been overcome. Once the problem has been identified, however, the instruments for coping with it have been found to be relatively scarce.

Interest rates, a classic instrument for decelerating the economy, stand at such an absurd level that it would be unfeasible to raise them even further. For their part, bank credit restrictions are too strong for the government to tighten them even further.

The remaining alternative is to close the gaps through which alternative credit mechanisms are operating. One of them, the so-called special check (in practice, a loan that each bank automatically grants to clients meeting some requirements)—along with restrictions on post-dated check financing—became the main targets of the measures announced yesterday.

The government seems to have bet that consumers will reduce their purchases either because they will be unable to easily issue checks that will be discounted in the future, or because they will avoid paying high interest rates.

The remedy is obviously bitter. The alternative, however, would have been even more bitter: The return of inflation and its deleterious effects. The problem is to confirm in practice whether the recent consumption restriction measures will not become an overdose.

If the economy is running at excessive speed, it must be decelerated. In doing this, however, there is always the risk of leading the country not toward plain deceleration, but to recession, because, if for no other reason, the result of each action will not become immediately obvious. In this regard, keen perception is essential.

Colombia

Samper Views Minister's Criticism of U.S. Envoy
PA0605022195 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravisión Television Canal A Network in Spanish 0000 GMT 6 May 95

[From the "Seven O'Clock Newscast"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Colombian President Samper and officials in his government seem to be radically forgoing their conciliatory style for a much more aggressive one. Following Foreign Minister Rodrigo Pardo's explosive statements last night—statements he made exclusively to the "Seven O'Clock Newscast"—on the constant meddling by the U.S. ambassador in Colombia's internal affairs, President Samper voiced his position on this hot topic. President Ernesto Samper Pizano announced support for Foreign Minister Rodrigo Pardo in the sense that national sovereignty must be respected despite foreign criticism.

[Begin Samper recording] No, I would not say that he was tugging him by the ear. I would call it a cordial reprimand. We have a policy, and we believe that this policy should be handled in an autonomous manner. I understand the ambassador today held a very cordial conversation with the foreign minister, and the incident is now history. [end recording]

The president also referred to the life imprisonment sentence handed down today against Dandeny Munoz Mosquera, also known as La Quica, for the 1989 attack against an Avianca plane.

[Begin Samper recording] I think this is good news, because it shows the United States is committed, just as Colombia is, to seriously combating this problem. [end recording]

Samper Pizano also reiterated his support for Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdivieso after learning of the State Council decision that [word indistinct] the Supreme Court ruling ordering the retirement of Gustavo de Greiff based on his age.

[Begin Samper recording] For the time being, and in line with the State Council's decision, the national government has renewed its support for the prosecutor, and I have personally done so too. [end recording]

Some Banana Rights To Be Given to U.S. To Avert Sanctions

PA0605024495 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2132 GMT 5 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Santa Fe de Bogota, 5 May (EFE)—Colombia will relinquish part of its 24-percent quota of banana exports to the EU in favor of U.S. firms to prevent reprisals by U.S. trade authorities, government sources reported today.

A proposal on the redistribution of this quota will be presented on Monday in Washington to the Clinton administration by Colombian trade officials. Government sources in Santa Fe de Bogota said the Colombian initiative of relinquishing part of its banana quota is designed to prevent the northern nation from imposing sanctions on Colombian products destined for the U.S. market.

The distribution of banana quotas within the EU created friction between Colombia and the United States because of complaints of possible damage raised by U.S. trade authorities and multinational marketing companies headquartered in the United States. Colombia, whose banana exports earn more than \$500 million worth of foreign currency annually, was allotted a quota of 24 percent. This quota included the 3 percent allotted to Nicaragua and which the Central American country turned over to Colombian exporters and producers.

The sources said Colombia is willing to give part of its share to U.S. multinational marketing companies.

Ethics Council Ratifies Suspension of 9 Congressmen

PA0505185395 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1542 GMT 5 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Santa Fe de Bogota, 5 May (EFE)—The Ethics Control Council of the ruling Liberal Party of Colombia today ratified the temporary suspension of Alvaro Benedetti, chairman of the Chamber of Representatives, and other congressmen accused of receiving drug money.

Following nine hours of discussion, the Ethics Control Council of Colombian President Ernesto Samper's party rejected the appeal filed by the congressmen, who claimed they had been "sentenced" by the party before the justice system was given the opportunity to rule on these cases.

Colombian Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdivieso sent to the Supreme Court last month the records of nine Liberal Party congressmen, along with documented evidence that they had received money from "Cali Cartel" front men for their 1994 election campaign.

The Ethics Control Council immediately suspended the nine congressmen, albeit only temporarily, but seven of them appealed the decision.

Members of the Liberal Party's Ethics Control Council explained today that the appeal was rejected because "there are no new elements" that can allow them to change the decision that was adopted to ensure the party's "survival and credibility."

The Supreme Court has until June to rule on the congressmen's situation, first as to whether a legal process can be initiated for illegal enrichment, a crime with which they were charged by the Prosecutor General's Office.

The case of the nine Liberal Party congressmen has caused an uproar in Colombia and has led to a deep crisis in the party of President Samper, who has supported the decision made by Prosecutor General Valdivieso and by the Ethics Control Council.

Prosecutor General Faces 'Difficult Task'

95CA0211A Santa Fe de Bogota SEMANA in Spanish 25 Apr 95 pp 44-45

[FBIS Translated Text] There is a somewhat crude saying used to describe a situation in which all the dirty laundry is suddenly brought out: "The fan has been turned on." And that is what happened in Colombia last week as a result of measures taken by the nation's prosecutor general. As the fan blades go round and round, no one knows precisely what is going to happen or to whom.

Despite its brevity and restraint, the concise six-paragraph-long bulletin issued by the Prosecutor General's Press Office is the most explosive document that Colombia has seen for many years. Technically speaking, it does no more than mark the opening of an investigation into the illegal enrichment of members of Parliament and a journalist and the transfer to the Supreme Court of probative material on several congressmen and the comptroller general, all of which will enable the Court to determine whether there is cause for undertaking further investigations.

Nonetheless, the legal technicalities involved in the case are insignificant compared with the moral and political ramifications of the prosecutor's decisions. Basically, it is not just a few individuals who are "on trial," but rather an entire political class and thereby, all of society.

In Colombia, this is taking the bull by the horns. Politics has been so contaminated by drug trafficking in recent years that it seemed difficult to single out cases. The "drug tapes" revealed the far-reaching nature of political connections with the Cali Cartel. Through them, it was determined that what had at first been considered a phenomenon limited to the Cauca Valley ended up being a national phenomenon.

All of this, which was a gradual and, in a certain sense, underground process, was discovered by Colombians this past year. Since then, no one has been quite sure just what might happen. In the midst of all the gossip, scant proof, and pressure brought to bear by the United States, the political atmosphere became rarified, but nothing concrete happened. Now, however, with Eduardo Mestre in jail, Alberto Giraldo a fugitive, and nine members of Parliament and the comptroller general under investigation, serious business lies ahead, because if they are guilty as charged, much of the political class is guilty of the same. A handful of persons enjoying national prominence will not just sit back and allow themselves to be turned into martyrs for an entire society that accepted and tolerated such coexistence for years, especially when

the sanction that could be imposed is neither social nor moral, but criminal, ie., involving prison.

The prosecutor faces the difficult situation of turning improper behaviors that are collectively tolerated into crimes. That is what happened to parliamentary aides when the new Constitution went into effect under the administration of Cesar Gaviria: At one point, all the councilors had warrants out for their arrest, but in the end, all were released. However, the result of the tremor is that there are no more parliamentary aides.

This incident may end up being a reference for the current case. Prosecutor Valdivieso achieved something that was indispensable in Colombia: a moral condemnation in the light of society's reason. He has the entire "healthy" country around him, but in practice, the grounds for his accusations could end up being more moral than legal. Basically, what is in doubt is the financing of political campaigns with money from drug trafficking, whose discovery set off this chain of events. Nevertheless, it will not be easy to demonstrate such financing because the money was usually in the form of cash.

However, several of the protagonists in last week's events do not think that the payment of a few bills during

the political campaign constitutes illicit personal enrichment. Consequently, they are going to argue that an election campaign is a collective process with political purposes rather than an individual search for profit. Furthermore, if they did finance expenditures, it was within that context. They will also argue that in a campaign tour, it is very difficult to know who pays.

All of these views will be heard, only illustrating how the ethical borders in Colombia have become ever more bendable. The country made the mistake of considering that Pablo Escobar was the evil and that consequently, all of his enemies were good. Since Escobar's main enemies were the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers, they were identified as the "good" drug traffickers.

The country got in bed with the Cali Cartel and is now getting a rude awakening. As a result, there is growing awareness that the evil was not the individual Pablo Escobar, but drug trafficking in general. And yet, this discovery came rather late, which makes the task of the Prosecutor General's Office very difficult. However, while it is possible that rough waters lie right ahead, what is happening in Colombia is healthy.

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